

**High-level Webinar: International Organisations and their Members Facing the Global
Crisis Together**

Improving The Role Of International Organisations Through More Transparent, Inclusive And
Evidence-Based International Rulemaking

**3 September, 10:00-12:00 CEST (Zoom) (09.00 BST)
Intervention by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim**

Thank you,

The global pandemic has turned all our lives upside down, yet I have been encouraged by the unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration in the maritime world encompassing Member States, NGOs and the multiple maritime industry stakeholders

In practical terms, since the beginning of the pandemic, the IMO has been working in constant liaison with UN entities, EC and Maritime industry, monitoring how this crisis is impacting shipping, - and responding to the various challenges.

To help government and industry address the issues in shipping created by the pandemic, IMO has been disseminating guidance and recommendations on a wide variety of COVID-related matters, as well as joint statements with other UN entities, urging action to address, in particular, the crew change crisis we currently experience..

IMO regulations allow for extension of certificates relating to safety surveys of ships and for seafarer certifications, in certain circumstances. We have been ensuring dissemination of guidance on how States might

appropriately apply alternative measures in light of the pandemic. Similarly, guidance and joint statements have been developed in cooperation with ILO, WHO, ICAO, UNCTAD and others, to reiterate the need to apply international treaty obligations and regulations to the greatest extent possible.

The biggest challenge facing the shipping world today is the need for crew changes to be carried out safely, to relieve seafarers who have been stranded at sea for months. ILO regulation sets a maximum sea time of 11 months – but many have exceeded that, we have received reports of some seafarers being stranded on ships for up to 17 months, continuously.

Many countries have made significant progress in designating seafarers as key workers and implementing the crew change protocol. But the rate of progress and throughput is not keeping up with the backlog of seafarers whose contracts have expired and who are waiting for repatriation. According to Seafarers Organization, due to Banning or severe restrictions of policies on crew change over, up to 500,000 seafarers out of 1.6M Seafarers are waiting to travel.

Consequently, concerns for the safety of navigation continue, taking into account fatigue and mental stress issues exacerbated by long periods of service.

While there is a long way to go, we have seen a willingness to work together. We need to capitalise on this spirit of collaboration as we move forward, in order to keep Global Supply Chain moving. The ability of shipping services and seafarers to transport more than 80% of global

trade in particular to deliver essential goods, including medical supplies, food and fuel is central to responding to, and overcoming this crisis.

The roots for close collaboration between IMO, Member States, other UN agencies, the shipping industry and seafarers' organizations have long been there, but we need to continue to strengthen and build on them, in conjunction with Acceleration of Economic Recovery from Covid-19 through the Sustainable Global Supply Chain.

Looking forward, we will review and learn from the experiences during this pandemic, to identify any regulatory gaps and fill them in terms of collaboration among all stakeholders.

Thank you.
